

IN THE CLAIMS:

The text of all pending claims are set forth below. Cancelled claims are indicated with claim number and status only. The claims as listed below show added text with underlining and deleted text with ~~strikethrough~~. The status of each claim is indicated with one of (original), (currently amended), (previously presented), (cancelled), (withdrawn), or (new).

1. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for managing software licenses of different software products, the apparatus comprising:

~~means for a managing unit~~ managing a number of software licenses, for the different software products, owned by an organization;

~~means for a collecting unit~~ collecting inventory information from each of a plurality of computers within the organization, ~~the inventory information including information of a computer comprising an inventory~~ regarding software actually installed nonvolatily in the ~~computers~~ corresponding computer, where the inventory information of each computer is generated by scanning the computer to search for predefined indicia of nonvolatile installation of respective of the different software products ~~collected~~ without regard for whether or not the installed software is currently executing on the computer; and

~~means for a calculating unit~~ calculating a difference between the number of software licenses owned by the organization and a number of software licenses actually ~~in use~~ installed, which is calculated on the basis of the collected inventory information, and ~~for~~ outputting information representing an ~~excessive~~ excess or insufficiency in the number of software licenses or information regarding purchase of additional software licenses.

2. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for managing software licenses according to Claim 1, further comprising:

~~means for a generating unit~~ generating a software dictionary which includes the predefined indicia of nonvolatile installation of respective of the different software products, and which identifies software products ~~during collection of the inventory information~~;

wherein ~~the means for collecting the inventory information~~ ~~collects~~ the inventory information is generated by using the generated software dictionary which is distributed to each of the plurality of computers in the organization from which the inventory information is collected.

3. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for managing software licenses of different

software products, the apparatus comprising:

~~means for~~ a storage storing a number of software licenses for the different software products, owned by an entire organization and storing a number of software licenses allotted to sections of the organization;

~~means for~~ a collecting unit collecting inventory information from each of a plurality of computers within the organization, ~~the inventory information including information of a computer comprising an inventory~~ regarding software actually installed nonvolatily in the ~~computers computer~~, where the inventory information of each computer is ~~collected~~ generated by scanning the computer to search for predefined indicia of nonvolatile installation of respective of the different software products without regard for whether or not the installed software is currently executing on the computer; and

~~means for~~ a calculating unit calculating a difference between the number of software licenses allotted to each of the sections of the organization and a number of corresponding software licenses actually ~~used in~~ installed on the computers of the section which is calculated on the basis of the collected inventory information and for outputting warning information in a case that the number of software licenses in actual use is greater than the number of allotted software licenses.

4. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for managing software licenses according to Claim 3, further comprising:

~~means for~~ a generating unit generating a software dictionary which includes the predefined indicia of nonvolatile installation of respective of the different software products, and which identifies software products during collection of the inventory information;

wherein ~~the means for collecting the inventory information collects the inventory information is generated~~ by using the generated software dictionary which is distributed to each of the plurality of computers in the organization from which the inventory information is collected.

5. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for managing software licenses of different software products, the apparatus comprising:

~~means for~~ a managing unit managing a number of software licenses, for the different software products, owned by an entire organization and managing a number of software licenses allotted to sections of the organization;

~~means for~~ a collecting unit collecting inventory information from each of a plurality of computers within the organization, ~~the inventory information including information of a computer~~

comprising an inventory regarding software actually installed nonvolatily in the computers
computer, where the inventory information of each computer is collected-generated by scanning
the computer to search for predefined indicia of nonvolatile installation of respective of the
different software products without regard for whether or not the installed software is currently
executing on the computer; and

~~means for a calculating unit~~ calculating a difference between the number of software licenses allotted to each of the sections of the organization and a number of corresponding software licenses actually ~~used within~~ installed on the computers of the section which is calculated on the basis of the collected inventory information and for outputting warning information which indicates that the section is allotted an excess number of software licenses compared with the number of software licenses in actual use.

6. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for managing software licenses according to Claim 5, further comprising:

~~means for a generating unit~~ generating a software dictionary which includes the predefined indicia of nonvolatile installation of respective of the different software products, and which identifies software products during collection of the inventory information;

~~wherein the means for collecting the inventory information collects the inventory information is generated~~ by using the generated software dictionary which is distributed to each of the plurality of computers in the organization from which the inventory information is collected.

7. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for managing software licenses of different software products, the apparatus comprising:

~~means for a managing unit~~ managing a number of software licenses, for the different software products, owned by an organization;

~~means for a receiving unit~~ receiving, from a higher-level server, an organization-wide policy which is information regarding a logic for collection of a usage number of software licenses;

~~means for a generating unit~~ generating, on the basis of the organization-wide policy, a software dictionary for identification of software and a license policy used for determination of presence of a license;

~~means for a distributing unit~~ distributing the software dictionary, over a network, to each of a plurality of computers within the organization in order to collect inventory information from each of the computers, the inventory information ~~including information of a computer comprising~~

an inventory regarding software actually installed nonvolatiley in the ~~computers~~ computer, where the inventory information of each computer is ~~collected~~ generated by scanning the computer to search for predefined indicia of nonvolatile installation of respective of the different software products without regard for whether or not the installed software is currently executing; and ~~means for a reporting unit~~ reporting to the higher-level server a usage number of software licenses calculated on the basis of the collected inventory information and the license policy.

8. (Currently Amended) A method for managing software licenses of different software products, the apparatus comprising:

managing a software-license holding number which represents a number of software licenses, for the different software products, owned by an organization, and managing, for sections of the organization, a software-license right number which represents a number of software licenses permitted to be used and a software-license usage number which represents a number of software licenses in actual use;

collecting, over a network, inventory information ~~from each of a plurality of computers within the organization, the inventory information including information of a computer comprising an inventory~~ regarding software actually installed nonvolatiley in the computers, where the inventory information is ~~collected~~ generated by scanning the computer to search for predefined indicia of nonvolatile installation of respective of the different software products without regard for whether or not the installed software is currently executing on the computer, and updating the software-license usage number of each of the sections of the organization;

in a case that the sum of the software-license usage numbers of all sections of the organization exceeds the software-license holding number, in response to such a determination automatically generating a purchase transaction for purchasing software licenses based on a difference between the sum and the software-license holding number;

adding a number of purchased software licenses to the software-license holding number; and

distributing a purchase expense to a section whose software-license usage number is greater than the corresponding software-license right number, and updating the software-license right number of the section.

9. (Currently Amended) A method for managing software licenses of different software products, the apparatus comprising:

managing a software-license holding number which represents a number of software licenses, for the different software products, owned by an organization, and managing, for sections of the organization, a software-license right number which represents a number of software licenses permitted to be used and a software-license usage number which represents a number of software licenses in actual use;

collecting, over a network, inventory information ~~from each of a plurality of computers within the organization, the inventory information including information of a computer comprising an inventory regarding software actually installed nonvolatiley in the computers, where the inventory information of each computer is collected~~ generated by scanning the computer to search for predefined indicia of nonvolatile installation of respective of the different software products without regard for whether or not the installed software is currently executing on the computer, and updating the software-license usage number of each of the sections of the organization;

in a case that the software-license holding number is greater than the sum of the software-license usage numbers of all sections of the organization, managing, as a software-license nonuse number, a difference between the software-license holding number and the sum; and

in a case that a necessity of purchasing software licenses arises and that a number of software licenses to be purchased in response to purchase requests from at least one section of the organization is grater than the software-license nonuse number, obtaining an actual number of software licenses to be purchased as the deference between them.

10. (Currently Amended) A storage medium storing a program for managing software licenses by use of a computer, the program causing the computer to perform processing comprising:

a managing unit managing a number of software licenses, for the different software products, owned by an organization;

a collecting unit collecting inventory information from each of a plurality of computers within the organization, ~~the inventory information including information of a computer comprising an inventory regarding software actually installed nonvolatiley in the computers corresponding computer, where the inventory information of each computer is collected~~ generated by scanning the computer to search for predefined indicia of nonvolatile installation of respective of the different software products without regard for whether or not the installed software is currently executing; and

a calculating unit calculating a difference between the number of software licenses owned by the organization and a number of software licenses actually ~~in use~~ installed, which is calculated on the basis of the collected inventory information and ~~for outputting~~ information representing an ~~excessiveness of~~ excess or insufficiency in the number of software licenses or information regarding purchase of additional software licenses.

11. (Currently Amended) A storage medium storing a program for managing software licenses according to Claim 10, wherein:

the program causing the computer to perform processing further comprising generating a software dictionary which includes the predefined indicia of nonvolatile installation of respective of the different software products, and which identifies software products during collection of the inventory information;

the generated software dictionary is distributed to the plurality of computers in the organization from which the inventory information is collected; and

the inventory information is collected by the ~~means for collecting of~~ the inventory information.

12. (Currently Amended) A storage medium storing a program for managing software licenses by use of a computer, the program causing the computer to perform processing comprising:

managing a number of software licenses owned by an organization and a number of software licenses allotted to sections of the organization;

collecting inventory information from each of a plurality of computers within the organization, the inventory information including information regarding software actually installed nonvolatiley in the computers, where the inventory information is collected by scanning the computer to search for predefined indicia of nonvolatile installation of respective of the different software products without regard for whether or not the installed software is currently executing; and

calculating a difference between the number of software licenses allotted to each of the sections of the organization and a number of software licenses actually used in the section which is calculated on the basis of the collected inventory information and for outputting warning information in a case that the number of allotted software licenses is greater than the number of software licenses in actual use or in a case that the section is allotted an excess number of software licenses compared with the number of software licenses in actual use.

13. (Original) A storage medium storing a program for managing software licenses according to Claim 12, wherein:

the program causing the computer to perform processing further comprising generating a software dictionary which identifies software during collection of the inventory information;

the generated software dictionary is distributed to the plurality of computers in the organization from which the inventory information is collected; and

the inventory information is collected by the means for collecting the inventory information.

14. (Currently Amended) A storage medium storing a program for managing software licenses by use of a computer, the program causing the computer to perform processing comprising:

managing a number of software licenses owned by an organization;

receiving from a higher-level server an organization-wide policy which is information regarding a logic for collection of a usage number of software licenses;

generating, on the basis of the organization-wide policy, a software dictionary for identification of software and a license policy used for determination of presence of a license;

distributing the software dictionary to each of a plurality of computers within the organization in order to collect inventory information from each of the computers, the inventory information including information regarding software actually installed nonvolatily in the computers, where the inventory information is collected by scanning the computer to search for predefined indicia of nonvolatile installation of respective of different software products without regard for whether or not the installed software is currently executing; and

reporting to the higher-level server a usage number of software licenses calculated on the basis of the collected inventory information and the license policy.

15. (Currently Amended) A storage medium storing a program for managing software licenses by use of a computer, the program causing the computer to perform processing comprising:

managing a software-license holding number which represents a number of software licenses owned by an organization, and managing, for sections of the organization, a software-license right number which represents a number of software licenses permitted to be used and a software-license usage number which represents a number of software licenses in actual use;

collecting inventory information from each of a plurality of computers within the organization, the inventory information including information regarding software actually installed nonvolatily in the computers, where the inventory information is collected by scanning the computer to search for predefined indicia of nonvolatile installation of respective of different software products without regard for whether or not the installed software is currently executing, and updating the software-license usage number of each of the sections of the organization;

in a case that the sum of the software-license usage numbers of all sections of the organization exceeds the software-license holding number, in response to such a determination automatically generating a purchase transaction for purchasing software licenses based on a difference between the sum and the software-license holding number;

adding a number of purchased software licenses to the software-license holding number;
and

distributing a purchase expense to a section whose software-license usage number is greater than the corresponding software-license purchase number, and updating the software-license right number of the section.

16. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for managing software licenses in an organization having a plurality of computers, the apparatus comprising:

a unit managing a number of software licenses owned by the organization;

a unit collecting inventory information from each of the plurality of computers within the organization, the inventory information including information regarding software actually installed nonvolatily in the computers, where the inventory information is collected by scanning the computer to search for predefined indicia of nonvolatile installation of respective of different software products without regard for whether or not the installed software is currently executing;
and

a unit calculating a difference between the number of software licenses owned by the organization and a number of software licenses actually in use which is calculated on the basis of the collected inventory information, and outputting information representing an excessive or insufficiency in the number of software licenses or information regarding purchase of additional software licenses.

17. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for managing software licenses in an organization having a plurality of computers, the apparatus comprising:

a unit managing a number of software licenses owned by the organization and a number

of software licenses allotted to sections of the organization;

a unit collecting inventory information from each of the plurality of computers within the organization, the inventory information including information regarding software actually installed nonvolatily in the computers, where the inventory information is collected by scanning the computer to search for predefined indicia of nonvolatile installation of respective of different software products without regard for whether or not the installed software is currently executing; and

a unit calculating a difference between the number of software licenses allotted to each of the sections of the organization and a number of software licenses actually used in the section which is calculated on the basis of the collected inventory information, and outputting warning information in a case that the number of software licenses in actual use is greater than the number of allotted software licenses.

18. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for managing software licenses in an organization having a plurality of computers, the apparatus comprising:

a unit managing a number of software licenses owned by the organization and a number of software licenses allotted to sections of the organization;

a unit collecting inventory information from each of the plurality of computers within the organization, the inventory information including information regarding software actually installed nonvolatily in the computers, where the inventory information is collected by scanning the computer to search for predefined indicia of nonvolatile installation of respective of different software products without regard for whether or not the installed software is currently executing; and

a unit calculating a difference between the number of software licenses allotted to each of the sections of the organization and a number of software licenses actually used within the section which is calculated on the basis of the collected inventory information, and outputting information which indicates that the section is allotted an excess number of software licenses compared with the number of software licenses in actual use.

19. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for managing software licenses in an organization having a plurality of computers, the apparatus comprising:

a unit managing a number of software licenses owned by the organization;

a unit receiving from a higher-level server an organization-wide policy which is information regarding a logic for collection of a usage number of software licenses;

a unit generating, on the basis of the organization-wide policy, a software dictionary for identification of software and a license policy used for determination of presence of a license;

a unit distributing the software dictionary, over a network, to each of the plurality of computers within the organization in order to collect inventory information from each of the computers, the inventory information including information regarding software actually installed nonvolatiley in the computers, where the inventory information is collected by scanning the computer to search for predefined indicia of nonvolatile installation of respective of different software products without regard for whether or not the installed software is currently executing; and

a unit reporting to the higher-level server a usage number of software licenses calculated on the basis of the collected inventory information and the license policy.

20. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for managing software licenses comprising:
a managing unit managing a number of software licenses owned by an organization having a plurality of computers;

a collecting unit collecting inventory information from each of the plurality of computers within the organization, the inventory information including information regarding software actually installed nonvolatiley in the computers, where the inventory information is collected by scanning the computer to search for predefined indicia of nonvolatile installation of respective of different software products without regard for whether or not the installed software is currently executing; and

a calculating unit calculating a difference between the number of software licenses owned by the organization and a number of software licenses actually in use which is calculated on the basis of the collected inventory information.

21. (Original) An apparatus for managing software licenses according to Claim 20, wherein the calculating unit outputs an information which is decided according to the calculation.

22. (Original) An apparatus for managing software licenses according to Claim 20, wherein the calculating unit displays a screen of a state of usage of software licenses, the screen including a hierarchy of the organization displayed in the form of a tree and the state of usage of software licenses within each selected section within the hierarchy, and the state of usage of software licenses including the number of software licenses allotted to the selected section and a number of software licenses actually in use at the selected section which is

calculated on the basis of the collected inventory information.

23. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for managing software licenses comprising:
a network;
a plurality of computers being within an organization and connected by the network in the form of a hierarchy;
a managing unit provided in a higher-level computer in the hierarchy and managing at least a number of software licenses allotted to sections of the organization;
a collecting unit provided in the higher-level computer and collecting inventory information from each of the plurality of computers within the organization, the inventory information including information regarding software actually installed nonvolatily in the computers, where the inventory information is collected by scanning the computer to search for predefined indicia of nonvolatile installation of respective of different software products without regard for whether or not the installed software is currently executing; and
a calculating unit provided in the higher-level computer and calculating a difference between the number of software licenses allotted to each of the sections of the organization and a number of software licenses actually in use at a section which is calculated on the basis of the collected inventory information.

24. (Previously Presented) An apparatus for managing software licenses according to Claim 23, wherein the managing unit has a data base provided in the higher-level computer and storing the number of software licenses allotted to each section of the organization and the collected inventory information from each of the plurality of computers.

25. (Original) An apparatus for managing software licenses according to Claim 23, further comprising:
a higher-level server connected to the higher-level computer, distributing a software contents and issuing license certificates.

26. (Previously Presented) An apparatus for managing software licenses according to Claim 25, wherein:
the higher-level server distributes to the higher-level computer an organization-wide policy which is information regarding a logic for collection of a usage number of software licenses;

the higher-level computer generates, on the basis of the organization-wide policy, a software dictionary for identification of software and a license policy used for determination of presence of a license, and distributes the software dictionary to each of the plurality of computers;

each of the plurality of computers send to the higher-level computer the inventory information including information regarding software actually installed nonvolatiley in the computers; and

the higher-level computer reports to the higher-level server license inventory which is calculated on the basis of the collected inventory information and the license policy.

27. (New) A method for automatically managing software licenses for different software products variously installed on a group of computers, the method comprising:

on each computer, automatically generating an inventory of any of the software products that are nonvolatiley installed to be available for execution on the computer by automatically scanning the computer to search for predefined indicia of nonvolatile installation of respective of the different software products; and

collecting the inventory lists of the respective computers over a network and using the collected inventory lists and using the collected inventory lists to automatically make licensing determinations about the group of computers.